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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: RENAMO ELECTION OFFICE HEAD DISMISSED AS PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY SPOKESMAN

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Summary

1. (SBU) Eduardo Namburete, director of the election office of Mozambique's main opposition party, RENAMO, was dismissed as head of the press office at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University on September 1. He was relieved of his duties shortly after assuming the position within RENAMO. Some RENAMO supporters have labeled his dismissal political harassment. Namburete retains his post as the director of the university's communication and arts school. End Summary.

Coincidence or Payback?

2. (SBU) During a September 8 meeting with acting pol/econ section chief and pol/econoff, the new RENAMO election office director Eduardo Namburete confirmed his removal as head of the press office at Eduardo Mondlane University, the public university that is Mozambique's largest and most highly regarded higher education institution. This came less than a month after he was sworn into office as director of the opposition party's election office. According to Namburete, he was advised of his removal by the university's Vice Chancellor, Brazao Mazula, on the morning of September 1. Namburete retains his post as the director of the university's School of Communication and Arts.

3. (SBU) Some RENAMO supporters have labeled his dismissal political harassment. Speaking in the Mozambican parliament, the head of the RENAMO parliamentary bench, Ossufo Quintine, claimed Namburete was removed only after he refused to leave his position as head of the RENAMO election office. Namburete did not openly support this claim, stating that under relevant articles of the University's code, the Vice Chancellor has the power to dismiss individuals in nominated positions, the head of the press office being one them. Despite this, Namburete admitted seeing some of his colleagues completely marginalized within the University after going public with their support for RENAMO. When asked whether he feared the same, Namburete commented he did not think he would be isolated. Namburete did disclose, however, that since aligning himself with RENAMO, he has lost some clients in his private communications consultancy.

4. (SBU) Namburete reported that in the weeks following his going public with joining RENAMO, he received telephone calls from colleagues congratulating him and vowing their active support. Nevertheless, since he was removed from his post at the press office, Namburete stated most have remained silent. Namburete seemed disappointed, but not surprised by such reactions. Namburete cited a case in which a wealthy colleague lost his business, home, and car after declaring allegiance to RENAMO. Despite the potential of such threats, Namburete was clear that he did not intend to return to FRELIMO, no matter the consequences.

The Elections: RENAMO Puts on Brave Face

5. (SBU) Speaking in his capacity as director of the RENAMO election office, Namburete expressed disappointment at the dire lack of funding facing the party. He lamented that RENAMO could not campaign as actively as FRELIMO due to such constraints. He was critical of FRELIMO's use of state funds and equipment for campaigning purposes, alleging it was equal to stealing from the government and the people. Namburete admitted that a long and difficult path lay ahead for RENAMO, but expressed confidence this would be the year for change and that the result of their work would be victory in the December elections. RENAMO Secretary General Viana da Silva Magalhaes echoed this confidence during a September 21 meeting with acting pol/econ section chief and visiting AF/S deputy director, stating that despite incidences of political harassment, citing Namburete as one example, he believed RENAMO would ultimately gain the support it needed to win this year's election.

Comment

6. (SBU) Over the past few months, RENAMO has actively pursued membership among the intellectual and academic community. Such moves have been interpreted as a step by RENAMO towards developing a more professional approach to

this year's election, especially in the face of historically low support among urban voters and increased scrutiny over the party's ability to govern. RENAMO was successful in its effort to gain Namburete's allegiance, but the speed with which he was removed from his high profile post may dissuade other would be RENAMO academics from going public. End Comment.
LA LIME